

Remarks

This amendment is in response to the Office Action dated October 9, 2002 wherein the Examiner rejected claims 1-25 and the telephone interview between Examiner Brahan and attorney Randall Erickson on January 22, 2003.

Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 11 and 17 above to further clarify "central region" as being a "central location." No new issues are presented by this change. The term "central region" was set forth in the prior amendment, particularly considering that the prior art cranes were distinguished in the Amendment Remarks as not being in the "central region," being either on the side of the trailer or at the end of the trailer. The Examiner's interpretation of "central region" as including a center of only a lateral edge or a center of only a longitudinal edge is contrary to the ordinary usage of "central region" of an area such as the area of a trailer.

The Examiner first rejected claims 1, 4, 6-8, 11, 17, and 23 under 35 USC 102 (b) as being anticipated by *Longert*.

The crane in *Longert* is not mounted at a central location, laterally and longitudinally, of the trailer; it is mounted on a lateral side of the trailer (see Figure 3). A central location mounting of the crane in *Longert* would defeat the purpose of *Longert*, that being a loader crane for loading and unloading logs carried by the bed of the trailer, over the bed of the trailer. Applicant submits that this rejection has been overcome and requests allowance of these claims.

The Examiner next rejected claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 9-11, 17, 22, 23, and 25 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by *Newton*.

The crane in *Newton* is not mounted at a central location, laterally and longitudinally, of the trailer; it is mounted at a front end of the trailer (see Figure 5). A central location mounting of the crane in *Newton* would defeat the purpose of *Newton*, that being a loader crane for loading and unloading material carried by the bed of the trailer, over the bed of the trailer. Thus, this reference would teach away from the present invention. Applicant submits that this rejection has been overcome and requests allowance of these claims.

The Examiner next rejected claims 1, 4, 6-11, 17, 22, 23 and 25 under 35 USC 102 (b) as being anticipated by *Peterson*.

The crane in *Peterson* is not mounted at a central location, laterally and longitudinally, of the trailer; it is mounted at a rear of the trailer (see Figure 1). A central location mounting of the crane in *Peterson* would defeat the purpose of *Peterson*, that being a loader crane for loading and unloading logs carried by the bed of the trailer, over the bed of the trailer. Thus, this reference would teach away from the present invention. Applicant submits that this rejection has been overcome and requests allowance of these claims.

The Examiner next rejected claims 1, 4, 6-11, 17, 22, 23 and 25 under 35 USC 102 (b) as being anticipated by *Cook*.

Cook does not describe a crane. *Cook* describes a backhoe. A backhoe digging arm would not be recognized by one of skill in the art as being a crane. Furthermore, *Cook* shows the backhoe arm extending from a rear of its supporting trailer (see Figure 2), not from a central location. Backhoe arms are deliberately located on a rear edge of their supporting platforms to allow the

bucket to trench up close to the rear edge of the backhoe. A central location of the backhoe vertical member would inhibit the ability of the backhoe arm to trench up close to the backhoe, i.e., the trailer rear half would be an obstacle to the bucket. Thus, if anything, this reference would teach away from the present invention. Applicant submits that this rejection has been overcome and requests allowance of these claims.

The Examiner next rejected claims 3 and 24 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Newton, Longert, Peterson, or Cook*. The Examiner next rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 5-7, 9-18, 21-23, and 25 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Havercamp et al.* in view of *Cook*. The Examiner next rejected claims 19 and 20 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Havercamp et al.* in view of *Cook* and further in view of *Newton*. Since none of these references disclose a crane center post located in a central location of a trailer, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been made and Applicant thus requests withdrawal of these rejections and allowance of these claims.

Applicant has added new dependent claim 26 which describes further patentable invention.

The invention provides a trailer-mounted crane apparatus which includes a trailer supported on wheels from the ground. A crane is mounted at a central location of the trailer and includes a crane arm that is extendable outwardly of the trailer. Unlike cranes which use a crane mounted on an end or outside a lateral edge of the trailer, the crane of the present invention minimizes the footprint of the crane to be more useable in close quarters.

By minimizing the footprint, the trailer-mounted crane can be configured of a sufficiently light weight to be usable upon delicate ground surfaces, such as are present on a golf course, without damaging the surfaces, such as might occur using a larger, heavier crane.

Applicant submits that all claims are in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP VERSION TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A mobile crane apparatus, comprising:
 - a trailer supported on at least one pair of wheels;
 - a hydraulically operated crane having a center post and a boom, said center post supported to extend upwardly from a central [region] location of said trailer, said central location substantially centrally located both longitudinally and laterally, and said boom extendable outwardly from said center post; and
 - a crane operator control station carried by said trailer.

Please amend claim 11 as follows:

11. (Twice Amended) A trailer-mounted crane apparatus, comprising:
 - a trailer supported from a ground surface on at least two wheels;
 - a hydraulically operated crane arm extendable from a post, said post mounted to said trailer to extend upwardly from a central [region] location of said trailer, said central location substantially centrally located both longitudinally and laterally, said crane arm extendable from said post;
 - a hydraulic crane power unit mounted to said trailer for supplying pressurized hydraulic fluid to said crane arm;
 - a control panel for said hydraulic power unit mounted on said trailer; and

an operator seat supported from said trailer and arranged to face said control panel.

Please amend claim 17 to read as follows:

17. (Amended) A mobile crane apparatus, comprising:

a trailer having an axle, said trailer supported on at least one pair of road transportation wheels mounted on said axle; and

a hydraulically operated crane having a center post and a boom, said center post supported to extend upwardly from a central [region] location of said trailer, said central location substantially centrally located both longitudinally and laterally, and said boom extendable outwardly from said center post, said center post being located substantially equidistant between said wheels.

Please add new claim 26 as follows:

26. The mobile crane apparatus according to claim 17, wherein: ▼

said trailer comprises a compact, single axle trailer having a substantially rectangular platform having four corners and a towing hitch assembly coupled to said platform and extending from a front end thereof; and

said apparatus further comprises four outriggers coupled to said platform, each outrigger located adjacent to a respective one of said four corners of the rectangular platform, said outriggers deployable to support said platform from grade at said four corners, said center post being located substantially equidistant to each outrigger.